



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## **Senator Montgomery visits Urban Assembly (UA) Unison School 's Hydroponic Farm**

Senator Velmanette Montgomery

February 3, 2017

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The work being done by the youth at UA Unison School is refreshing and inspiring. The youth are being engaged in work that encourages compassion, teaches advocacy and arms them with the skills to be leaders in innovative fields.

As part of Community Education Council District 13 Presidents' Council Legislative Breakfast, Senator Montgomery had the opportunity to meet with students from Urban Assembly (UA) Unison School and toured their classroom hydroponic farm. The farm is operated in partnership with Teens for Food Justice (TFFJ). Urban Assembly (UA) Unison School is a Title 1 school where 96% of children qualify for free lunch.

I was excited and impressed to see middle school children enthusiastically engaged in growing (and eating) fresh greens and other vegetables; and sharing them with their classmates and their community.

I spoke with students and teachers at the school, and learned that the children not only are learning how to grow and harvest vegetables, but they are receiving training from TFFJ to become confident and capable food justice advocates and leaders.

The high-capacity, vertical hydroponic farms are a cost-effective, sustainable way to increase the amount and quality of food that children have access to in school. They are an effective solution to the crisis of food insecurity in my district. Furthermore, engaging young students in school-based farming will result in a new generation of educated and experienced anti-hunger advocates and young people who are knowledgeable and trained in cutting-edge, sustainable solutions to healthy food access in urban communities.

Senator Montgomery is proud to support Teens for Food Justice and UA Unison's plans to expand their successful farm by building a courtyard greenhouse that would grow production twenty-fold – from 100 to **2,000** pounds of produce a month for the school and surrounding community.

For more information about Urban Assembly Unison School, visit <http://uaunison.org/>

To learn more about Teens for Food Justice, visit <http://www.teensforfoodjustice.org/grow/bring-tffj-to-your-school-and-community/>

To learn more about Unison School's hydroponic farm, visit <http://ht.ly/8ZMu3073bP8>